[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Jagesh Desai) in the Chair]

STATUTORY RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CONTINUANCE IN FORCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION UNDER ARTICLE 356 IN RESPECT OF PUNJAB

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir I beg to move the Resolution:

"That this House approves the continuance in force of the Proclamation. dated the 11th May, 1987, in respect of Punjab, issued under Article 356 of the Constitution by the President for a further period of six months with effect from the 11th November, 1987."

As the House is aware, in view of the then prevailing situation in Punjab, Proclamation under article 356 of the Constitution in relation to the State of Punjab was issued on May 11, 1987, on the recommendation of the Governor and the State Legislative Assembly kept under suspended animation.

Approval of the Lok Sabha as well as Rajya Sabha for the issue of the Proclamation under article 356 was obtained on 12th May, 1987. The Proclamation sa approved will now cease to operate on the 10th of November, 1987 at the expiration of period of six months.

The Governor of Punjab's assessment is that when the President's Rule was promulgated in Punjab the State administration had to deal with two dangerous trends: Firstly, fundamentalist terrorism....

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): Is there any report from the Governor?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Let me finish the statement. Then it will be clear.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): Where are the copies of the Report?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Kindly see the Constitution. Firstly, fundamentalist terrorism in all its destructive and anti-national manifestation; secondly. ordinary terrorism that was both dangerous and antinational in character.

Sir, the first menace had been tackled successfully immediately after the promulgation of the President's Rule. The fundamentalist terrorism has virtually disappeared. The meat, liquor and cigarette shops which had been forced by the fundamentalists among terrorists to be closed were all reopened. The barbers commenced carrying on their work. Violent people stopped making demands on the heads of educational institutions to order their students to wear uniforms of their allegedly fundamental design or colour. Marriages were again held peacefully.

However terrorism still continues. The law and order situation in the State continues to be disturbed. During the period from 12th May, 1987 to 21st October, 1987, the security forces arrested 1935 terrorists and shot 197 terrorists in encounters. The terrorists also killed 446 civilians and 49 policemen during this period. However, the morale of the police is now high and there is a will amongst them to fight and ultimately succeed in containing terrorism. The various extremist groups are at present under intense pressure from the police and para-military forces and have suffered serious reversals. Although killings have not stopped, the terrorists are in hiding and virtually on the run.

In spite of reverses on the law and order situation there is a discernable change for the better. A great deal of confidence has returned. 125 migrant families have just returned from Delhi and more are expected to go back shortly. Opposition is now fast growing from every

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

community to terrorism, anti-nationalism and killings of innocents. The encouraging feature is that even villagers are showing courage and coming forward inlarge numbers to apprehend terrorists.

The Governor is of the view that if a popular Government is installed now, the present firmness will go and the people thrown into a State of nervousness and disarray. Moreover, there is no party which can possibly lead any Government effectively in the present condition of the State with any firmness or determination.

In view of the circumstances stated above, the Governor has recommended that the Proclamation dated 11th May, 1987 be extended for a further period of six months and the State Assembly continued to be kept under suspended animation. Keeping in view the situation prevailing in the State and taking all relevant factors into consideration, it is proposed that the President's Rule may be continued for a further period of six months with effect from 11th of November, 1987. If so approved. the President's Rule, unless revoked earlier, will continue up to the 10th of May, 1988.

Sir, in view of the position explained by me. I solicit the approval of the hon. House to the Resolution mentioned by me at the beginning.

The question was proposed.

SHRI K. MOHANAN (Kerala): Sir, through you I request the.....

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Sir, he did not explain why the Governor's Report is not placed on the Table of the House. What about the Governor's Report? This may not be constitutionally obligatory but it is the practice of this House that whenever we have discussed a Proclamation under article 356, the Report of the Governor is also laid on the Table of the House, and we have discussed the matter against the background of that Report.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am willing to check this once again. The Secretary-General can tell us what the practice is. I am informed that the practice is to place the report of the Governor at the time when the original Proclamation is made. But subject again to correction, I don't think there is a practice of placing the report for the continuation. But I am willing to abide by whatever the practice of the House is. But I think we should ascertain what the practice is.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: I wish it had been checked up because there would be very many cases of extension of the Prsident's rule.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Several.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: I do not think that there is any difference between the Proclamation as it is first discussed and when it is discussed on being extended.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): We shall check up.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (मध्य प्रदेश): सभापति जी, वहां राष्ट्रपति राज बढ़ाया जाये, यह फैसला हमें अभी करना है। इस समय गवर्नर की रिपोर्ट क्या है, अगर सदन में परम्परा नहीं है इस तरह की रिपोर्ट मंगाने की तो समय आ गया है कि हम इस तरह की रिपोर्ट मंगाना शुरू करें, कि राज्यपाल का आंकलन क्या है, असेसमेंट क्या है सिचुएशन का।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): For that purpose if any such precedent is there, that is what we shall check up and if it is necessary then in future we shall see that report of the Governor is placed before the House.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): It is not a question of

necessary or not necessary. Sir, we are in an extraordinary situation in Punjab. It is a special case. It is a special situation and our understanding is very much important, if yo want us to participate in this debate meaningfully. Therefore the Governor's report or his statement is very necessary. We should know whether there is justification for the continuation of this President's rule for another six months. What is his assessment? We have to see whether this House can agree with that assessment.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): That is why we have to see whether in the past we had placed the report of the Governor before the House. In the meantime, I would like to know from the Minister whether he can throw some light on this.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): It is not merely a question whether it has been circulated in the past. Mr. Chidambaram does not deny the utility of such a report being discussed here, since Parliament can take a total view on it. Under the circumstances, can be not make an arrangement that this report be circulated immediately and till that time, let us adjourn today for the time being, and at 2.30 p.m. we can take it up. In the meantime, let him circulate it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Would the Minister like to say something on the report of the Governor? Would he like to mention some salient features of the report?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Sir, I have in my opening speech given the gist of the Governor's opinion. I have said that the Governor is of that view. I do not know what we are asking for. If the Secretary-General or the Chair will tell us that the practice is to place the report, I will place the report. It is a matter of checking. As far as I have been able to gather. I am told that the practice is to place the Governor's report, when the original proclamation is made. But there is no such practice for continuation. But I am not willing to quarrel on that. This can be checked and we can decide. Meanwhile...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Meanwhile some Members can speak.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: In the meanwhile the discussion can go on.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: If you have no objection, why don't you circulate it?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I am not willing to do anything contrary to past practice.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE (Maharashtra): And willing to abide by the practice.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Yes.

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA (Punjab): It is not a question of practice. It is a question of desirability.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: So far as the practice is concerned, I would like to quote KAUL & SHAKDHER, which says "every proclamation issued by the President has to be laid before each House of Parliament. While laying a proclamation on the Table of Parliament. While laying a proclamation on the Table no obligation is cast on the Government to lay also a copy of the report of the Governor of the State concerned in case where the President has acted on the said report. However a summary of the Governor's report or the Governor's report in extenso has generally been laid on the Table." This is the practice.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: On the proclamation. I accept, yes. But this is not a proclamation.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Mr. Chairman, what we do today will become a precedent again because the issue has not been raised till now, the issue was never raised before. Because, as far as I recall, there has never been a debate without a Governor's report. But what is more important is what my friend, Nirmal, said, namely that a proper discussion can take place, and even if there is no precedent this can become a precedent, and a discussion takes place after the Governor's report is placed and particularly when the Government has no objection. He says that he has given a summary already. In this House itself there are two opinions publicly expressed.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: I have said and I repeat that I will abide by the practice in this House and to the best of my information—and I do not claim very long experience in this matter—the Governor's report is placed only along with the Proclamation. Today, there is no Proclamation; it is a Resolution continuing that Proclamation.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: What is the harm in placing it?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: It is a Resolution for continuing the old Proclamation. If the practice of the House is to have the report along with the Resolution, I will place it, but if there is no such practice, I beg to be allowed not to create a new practice.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): During the lunch recess, we shall check up. Meanwhile, let the debate continue.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): Form the information available, there are no precedents when continuation of the Proclamation is sought for. As far as this issue is concerned, there is no precedent and so, in the meantime, the debate may be allowed to continue.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: It is for the debate that the report was necessary. If the debate is over, and then it is circulated, what is the worth of it?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Shri Mohanan.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: We will get another chance to discuss it after six months. But still, the point is relevant as raised by Mr. Advani, technically; but practically what is the difference between the Central Government and the Governor? So, I am prepared to take part in this discussion.

Through you, Sir, I request the august House to disapprove this Resolution moved by the hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs to extend the time of President's rule in Punjab by another six months.

In his Resolution, Sir, he has referred to article 356 of the Constitution of India. Here, I would like to quote this article. It says:

> "If the President, on receipt of a report from the Governor of a State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, the President may by Proclamation...

I do not want to take up the point which we have just discussed regarding the report of the Governor. But according to the Constitutional provision under article 356, it is only on receipt of a report from the Governor that the President may proclaim on such and such occasions. But my point is, who are these Governors?

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Or, who is this Governor?

SHRI K. MOHANAN: No, I am not mentioning the names, I do not want to mention the names of 1.00 P.M. Mr. S. S. Ray or anybody. But my point is, who are these Governors? At the time when the Constitution was being framed, our founding fathers expected that any Government which is elected by the people of the country will act according to the will and wishes of the people. But Sir, I am sorry to say. I do not want to use the word 'stooge' or 'tool'. I do not want to use such words. But the gubernatorial post has been coming down to a stage where they are merely functioning as the agents of the ruling party.

SHRI ARUN SINGH (Uttar Pradesh): Sir, on a point of order. There is a clear jurisdiction. This kind of argument, where the hon. Member has now made it general, he is not even specific but made it general in respect of all Governors, is violative of the rights and privileges of Governors. I think, this is entirely an irrelevant line of argument.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: I am not mentioning any names, only the institution.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: He did not name any particular individual.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Why should it not be mentioned? He is only mentioning how the institution of Governors is being used.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: About the institution of Governors and its misuse.

SHRI ARUN SINGH: Sir, I am still standing on my point of order. The record will speak for itself. As I have understood him what Mr. Mohanan said was that immediately after Independence, those gentlemen who were appointed as Governors under the provisions of the Constitution were certain types of individuals but those individuals who are now holding the office do not meet those requirements. Mr. Mohanan, I think you will agree that it is not the institution which you are talking about.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: This is exactly my point.

SHRI ARUN SINGH: That is why I say this is violation of the rights and privileges of Governors.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: I say the institution has degenrated to such a stage. I do not mention any names. I do not want to mention any names.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI *JAGESH DESAI*): *Better avoid it.*

SHRI K. MOHANAN: One fine morning, a Congress (I) Chief Minister is appointed as Governor of a State. The next morning, he is appointed as a Minister in the Central Cabinet.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal): *Via* an organisational post.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Mr. Mohanan, how is it relevant to the debate?

SHRI K. MOHANAN: Sir, I am quoting from article 356. It is on receipt of the report from the Governor that the President is acting. This is the provision in article 356.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): My point is, how is it relevant to the discussion?

SHRI K. MOHANAN: It is relevant.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Punjab): He wants to suggest there that only the CPI (M) cadres should be appointed as Governors.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: I am second to none in shouting. But I am quoting article 356. As per this only

[Shri K. Mohanan]

on receipt of the Governor's report, the President is acting. That is why I ask what is the status and stature of the report and the Governors appointed by the Centre. This is my point. One day, a person is a Chief Minister. The next day, he is appointed as a Governor. Tne third day, he is appointed as a Central Minister. On the fourth day, he becomes the Vice-President of the ruling party.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: The report of such a person will be a party report.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: This particular person is not here.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, he said it once. You ruled it out as being irrelevant to the debate. He has said it again. How does it become more relevant? What is he talking about? We are talking about the Proclamation in Punjab.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: Sir, under the cover of darkness, one Governor absconded from West Bengal and the next day he appeared in the House as a member of the ruling party.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): How it is relevant?

SHRI K. MOHANAN: I am coming to the point. Now almost six months have elapsed when the President's rule was imposed in Punjab. The plea or the pretext taken was that the law and order situation had completely broken down under an elected Government, but everybody knows that the decision was politically motivated, that is my charge. My point is that the Union Government and the ruling party consider the Punjab issue as a law and order issue, but on my part, I consider it to be a political problem . I do not want to quote the number of killings before the imposition of the President's rule in Punjab or after the imposition of the President's rule in Punjab. It was an average of about 75 before but now it is an average of 150 per month.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Is it not an improvement?

SHRI K. MOHANAN: Yes, it is a very good improvement, hundred per cent improvement.

So, the real situation which we have to take into consideration in regard to my charge is that the Government of India is dealing with the problem as a law and order issue. Tnis is the rate of killing on a average and still it is stated that at that time the law and order situaion had completely broken down. Even then I am not saying that we should decide the matter on the basis of the rate of killings before and after. The situation is changing, the political situation is changing. So many other issues are also cnnected with that. I am not clinching on that point alone, but my point is that a vast majority of the people in Punjab are peace-loving. Sikh masses have shown such a restraint in tne last six years. In spite of the instigations made by the terrorists, the extremists, and their venomous propaganda, not a single riot has taken place in Punjab. The terroritsts are unleashing such venomous propaganda to divide the people on the basis of religion, Hindus and Sikhs. Even then you see the people of Punjab, especially tne Sikh masses, have shown such a restraint. There has not been a single incident of communal riot on the soil of Punjab in the last six years, but I am sorry to say that the Government of Punjab is not able to appreciate the situation in Punjab in the background of this particular aspect. Sir, I appreciate the Governor of Punjab was a dissident of the Congress(I) party and tnen he has been appointed the Governor of Punjab. (*Interruptions*). I do not want to go into that, I do not want to mention that.

SHRI M. M. JACOB: It is uncharitable. Mr. Mohanan is not well and we do not want to disturb him.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: I am charging, he is a seasoned politician. He is not a dissident, but a seasoned politician. I express my appreciation for him. But he should understand that Punjab problem is not a mere law and order problem. (*Time bell rings*) What is this, Sir?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Only 14 minutes are given to your party. Thirteen minutes are already over.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: In this context I would recall that from 1981 onwards, the present situation in Punjab—this is my charge—is the result of the policy pursued and followed by the Congress(I) Party and the administrators at the centre. I do not want to elaborate this point at this juncture because it will be painful for all of us when we go into the past. But I would like to say that by dismissing a government duly elected by the people, it has created a wedge between the administration and the people. The common people have access to a government duly elected by the people, but the administration appointed by the Centre is something different. So the wedge between the adminisrtation and the people is widening. The extremists are utilizing this wedge. That is my point. Tnat is why I am asking for the restoration of the duly elected Government in Punjab.

Sir, my humble question to the Central Government is: what steps have been taken by you as a politilal party, as the ruling party at the Centre, as the biggest political party in the country, to mobilise the people, to rouse their enthusiasm and will power against the terrorists, extremists, separatists and such other forces? Though my party is a small party in Punjab when compared to the ruling party, but I am proud to say that the CPI and CPM are the only political parties which have done their level best. From September last, they have been moving about in squads of 20, 50 or 250 people and more than 1,500 public meeting nave been convened by these two small Communist Parties. Our comrades are dedicating their lives against these terrorists. I am asking this question without any political prejudice: what steps have been taken by the ruling Central party in this regard to rouse the enthusiasm of the people?

People of Punjab are not in favour of extremists. They are not supporting them. On 22nd October last the extremists called for a Sarba Khalsa. What was the response of the people? They reacted coolly to that. Nothing happened there. Even when the paramilitary forces swooped on the Golden Temple, nobody was there to resist it. That is because the people of Punjab are peace-loving people. They do not want to create an ugly situation. That is why they have reacted coolly to that. But, at the same time, they have their own complaints against this Government. May I ask why tne Jodhpur detenus are still in prison, after more than two years? Why not a single point in the Longowal-Rajiv Gandhi Accord has been implemented? You have appointed commissions after commissions but these commissions never stuck to the terms of reference given to come to a conclusion and submit a report to the Government. Why? So, the point is tnat the problem of Punjab is not a problem of law and order. A Siddharth Shanka Ray or a Ribeiro cannot solve the problem of Punjab. The problem of Punjab is political.

Sir, I am participating in the Punjab discussion and I think this is the twelfth time in the last four years. In another six or seven months I may participate another three or four times.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Please conclude

now. You have already taken 19 minutes.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: Only 19 minutes.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Please conclude now. Only 14 minutes were allotted to you.

SHRI K. MOHANAN: Sir, my BJP comrades...

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: No comrades... (*Interrdptions*) ...

SHRI K. MOHANAN: Nothing wrong in that. They considered that the only solution to the Punjab problem was deploying the Army or creating a security belt in the border and imposition of President's rule. I do not know if Mr. Advani is still for President's Rule in Punjab. Earlier they were advocating imposition of President's rule in Punjab. What is the result now, after six months? Let us take stock of the situation there, what is happening there. You were vehemently advocating imposition of President's rule at that time. What is the result now? I don't know if, even now, you are for extending President's rule in Punjab. That is why I am saying that the BJP or the Akali Dal or the Congress (I) Party is not taking into consideration the imperialist machinations in this country to destabilize this country ..... (*Interruptions*)... Destabilization not in the form of the Prime Minister's words. It is quite different. So, my humble request is that you should implement the Punjab Accord, at least the main points in that Accord and simple things like release of the Jodhpur detenus and the river waters issue. Not Sikhs alon but the whole people of Punjab have some genuine problems. You are simply sitting here and dismissing a duly elected Government and extending the President's rule. You never intervened and there is nothing on your part to solve the problem politically. You are sending the Army and the BSF and everything-para-military and military forces—there, but it will not solve the problem of Punjab.

So, once again, Sir, I request the Goevrnemnt to reinstate the duly elected Government of Punjab, in ervene in this issue on a political basis and find a solution in this regard. Therefore, Sir, through you I request this august House to reject the Resolution moved by the honourable Minister of State for Home Affairs.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Mr. Vice-Chairman, six months back, when it became painfully clear to every poltical analyst that the State Government in Punjab had failed miserably to demonstrate the requisite political will to fight the terrorism in the State, the Centre had to rise to its obligations under the Constitution to protect every State against internal disturbance.

Earlier, every possible assistance had been rendered to the Akali Government in this regard, but, unfortunately, severe internal discord and strife continued to rock the Barnala Ministry. Some of the Ministers brazenly supported the terrorists. Corruption was rampant. Developmental programmes were given a go-by, and political interference of unprecedented magnitude began to emaciate and ossify the Administration. The terrorists spread their nefarious activities, killing even poor, innocent people engaged in petty trade like that of hair-dressing or sale of cigarettes.

Sir, this was sheer bigotry and madness cutting at the very vitals of our system. In the State there was utter chaos. The State Government had lost every semblance of control over the situation. A parallel government run by the terrorists who revelled in the mayhem of Punjab came into existence. Some of the religious places were being but to irreligious uses, and an ordinary person feared

to enter thier portals to pay obeisance to the Almighty. The number of terrorised people fleeing the State began to swell alarmingly. The hitherto viorant, laughing, dancing and singing Punjab was bleeding profusely, while the Akali Ministry having failed the peace-loving people who had reposed confidence in them with the hope that they would run the Government on democratic lines, remained complacent and busy only sticking to power but did precious little to meet the situation. It was this distressing scenario, Sir, that left no alternative with the Centre but to take over the reins of the State Administrations.

This was no easy decision. It was rather a hard and sad one. To pull the State out of the quagmire of violence and uncertainty, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had invited Sant Longowal and signed the Punjab Accord. It was an act of good faith aimed at ushering in an era of amity, peace and goodwill in the State and at restoring its pristine glory. But the cause of Punjab or for that matter of their own religion, was not dear to the terrorists. They gunned down Sant Longowall in the holy precincts of a gurdwara.

They could not deter the peace-loving and patriotic Punjabis from participating in the secular, democratic processes. In the following elections, despite the extremists' call for boycott, the turn-out was the highest ever. But, back to power, the Akalis as ususal became oblivious of the mandate and the duties. Their insatiable desire for power and personal aggrandisement led to a vertical split, and the two factions vied with each other to adopt extremist postures in an effort to win people's support. This was a ripe situation for the terrorists to re-surface again and play havoc with the State. What followed--as I just said—was that before Punjab could recover from the trauma, it was again pushed into the drak abyas of chaos, fear and uncertainty.

Sir, during the last six months of the President's Rule, there has been a perceptible improvement in the situation. A relentless war has been launched against terrorism and the results have been satisfactory. Efforts to isolate the terrorists from the people have borne fruit. There have been instances where people have chased the terrorists and fought with them. A new feeling of confidence and determination has been infused in the police and other para-military forces and there is greater coordination amongst them. The intelligence has also woken out of its slumber and clues to any incident are found without loss of time.

The President's Rule has been criticised on the ground that the number of killings has been more during this period as compared to the earlier period. Factually this may be correct, but the argument is fallacious. These killings have been the manifestation of terrorists' desperation, who find themselves on the run under the police pressure. They have with them the most sophisticated weapons and have often struck at will. But, they also comprehend the difference from the situation that prevailed when they could commit an act and get away with it. They are no longer able to force people to provide them shelter and a massive offensive has been launched to meet the menace. The results are encouraging. You just have to visit Punjab to feel the waves of optimism wafting across the State. It is to consolidate this gain and to restore normalcy that the extension of the President's Rule in the State for another period of six months assumes justification.

Sir, I really feel very awkward and embarrassed in advocating the suspension of normal democratic process in my State, but, to be honest, there is no getting away from it at the moment. No party or group enjoys majority in the Assembly and, unfortunately, the Akalis are badly divided amongst themselves. The split had led to the formation of two Akali Dals.

[Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal]

But now there is an intense inter-fighting between the two Dals as well. Though there may be a glut of leaders amongst them, they lack total leadership. The recent elections to the Executive of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee, the apex body managing the Sikh shrines, has further complicated the situation with two factions claiming victory.

I, like all other hon. Members, am a strong votary of a political solution to the Punjab problem and am convinced that it is only through dialogue that Punjab can be restored to its pristine glory. But I am also conscious of the fact of the unpalatable reality that at present the Akalis, who erroneously claim to be the sole representatives of the major community in the State, have failed their constituents at a very critical juncture in their history and are in no position to provide a strong leadership.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI JAGESH DESAI): Mr. Bansal you can continue after the lunch recess.

Now the House is adjourned for lunch and will again meet at 2.30 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at thirty-one minutes past one or the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-two minutes past two of the clock, **The Deputy Chairman** in the Chair.

STATEMENT THE MINISTER

II Grant of Pension to Eminent Freedom Fighters

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): Madam, Deputy Chairman, The House will recall that, at the instance of the Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Government had taken up the Scheme for grant of pension to freedom fighters in the Silver Jubilee year of Independence. The Scheme was subsequently liberalised and renamed as the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme. Although over 1,43,000 freedom fighters have so far been granted Samman Pension under the scheme in addition to the pensions granted to freedom fighters by respective State Governments under their own schemes, it was seen that a number of eminent freedom fighters whose contribution to the freedom movement is well-know had not applied for sanction of pension in their favour. It has been felt right and proper that they should be sanctioned pension irrespective of whether they applied for it or not. It has also been felt that it would be most apt to make such a gesture during the 40th Year of Independence.

It gives me greatest pleasure to announce that as a small token of the Nations gratitude to their invaluable contribution in the attainment of the goal of national independence it has been decided, with the kind approval of the Prime Minister, to sanction Samman pension *suo-moto* to the following 97 eminent freedom fighters:—On this occasion, Madam, I beg to place this on the Table of the House.

1. Shri R. Venkataraman, now President of India
2. Giani Zail Singh, ex-President
3. Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao, Ex-CM Andhra Pradesh and now Union Minister
4. Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy, ex-President
5. Sardar Darbara Singh, ex-CM Punjab and now Member of Parliament
6. Shri H. N. Bahuguna, ex-CM of Uttar Pradesh and former Union Minister
7. Com. S. A. Dange, Communist Leader and Trade Union Leader